

United States Senate Committee on
**AGRICULTURE
NUTRITION
& FORESTRY**

U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, Chairwoman

Opportunities for Outdoor Recreation

The Agricultural Act of 2014

The 2014 Farm Bill will strengthen efforts to protect, maintain and develop critical wildlife habitats. Healthy and vibrant wildlife habitat and clean, fishable waters are not only good for our environment, they also support hunting, fishing, and bird watching that benefit rural economies and create jobs. The 2014 Farm Bill represents the strongest and most robust pieces of legislation for sportsmen and recreation in generations.

Conservation Compliance

The 2014 Farm Bill includes an historic new agreement that is one of the most significant strides in land and water conservation policy in decades. The agreement, reached between conservation and agriculture organizations, requires farmers to engage in conservation compliance practices in order to receive federal crop insurance benefits. The agreement ensures crop insurance will remain strong while conserving millions of acres of vulnerable lands and natural resources that our nation's farmers and ranchers will rely on for generations to come.

Sodsaver Provision to Preserve Critical Grassland Habitats

The bill includes a provision to encourage farmers to protect critical grassland and prairie habitats. Grasslands are prime habitat for critical wildlife and migratory bird populations.

Regional Conservation Partnerships Program Creates New Opportunity for Partners

The bill significantly expands opportunities for conservation organizations and local communities to partner with farmers to maintain watersheds and wildlife habitats.

Public Access to Private Land

The bill continues to encourage private landowners to allow public access to their land for recreational uses such as hunting, fishing and bird watching. The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program receives \$40 million in mandatory funding in the bill.

Greater Focus on Wildlife Habitats

The bill strengthens the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to increase support for wildlife habitats. At least five percent of the program funding is directed to projects that support wildlife habitats, and wildlife considerations can be included in the application selection process. The conservation compliance provision will ensure that sensitive wildlife habitat is conserved.

Conservation Reserve Program Continues to Support Habitat

The Conservation Reserve Program is designed to prevent soil erosion and improve water quality. The bill establishes a new, 2-million acre grasslands enrollment option to encourage farmers to conserve critical grasslands. It also protects options for farmers and foresters to develop wildlife habitats on their land.

Conservation Stewardship Program and Locally Identified Resource Concerns

The bill increases flexibility for wildlife habitat priorities to be included in the Conservation Stewardship Program, creating additional opportunities for conservation activities that benefit wildlife species.

Easement Program Protects Wetlands and Valuable Grasslands

The bill streamlines and consolidates programs to create an easement program with mandatory funding to protect wetlands as well as farmland or grassland that is threatened by suburban sprawl. The bill protects access to wetland easements for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities.